



H.Res. 548 – Expressing the ongoing concern of the House of Representatives for Lebanon's democratic institutions and unwavering support for the administration of justice upon those responsible for the assassination of Lebanese public figures opposing Syrian control of Lebanon

Floor Situation

H.Res. 548 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Gary Ackerman (D-NY) on July 16, 2007. The bill was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs whereupon the Committee agreed to allow the legislation to be considered under suspension of the rules.

H.Res. 548 is expected to be considered by the House of Representatives on September 25, 2007.

Summary

H.Res. 548 condemns the attempts by Hezbollah and other pro-Syrian groups to undermine and intimidate the democratically-elected and legitimate Government of Lebanon by extra-legal means.

H.Res. 548 condemns Syria and Iran for their ongoing roles in providing arms to Lebanese militias, particularly Hezbollah and Palestinian factions in Lebanon, in blatant contravention of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701.

H.Res. 548 confirms the strong support of the United States for United Nations Security Council resolutions concerning Lebanon, and the clear and binding mandate of the international community for the arms embargo and disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, and particularly Hezbollah and Palestinian factions in Lebanon.

Additionally this legislation expresses its strong appreciation to Belgium, China, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, the Republic of Korea, Luxemburg, Malaysia, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tanzania, and Turkey for their contributions of military personnel to serve in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The UNIFIL now has 13,251 troops of the 15,000 troops authorized in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701.

Background

In April 2005, Lebanon's Cedar Revolution led to the withdrawal of Syrian troops following 30 years of Syrian military occupation.

In May and June of 2005, Lebanon held parliamentary elections. These led to the formation of a government under Prime Minister Fuad Siniora, with a majority of the parliament and cabinet committed to strengthening Lebanon's independence and the sovereignty of its democratic institutions of government.

Lebanese independence and sovereignty are still threatened by an ongoing campaign of assassination and attempted assassinations of Lebanese political and public figures opposed to Syrian interference in Lebanon's internal affairs, and terrorist bombings intended to incite ethnic and religious hatred, the continuing presence of state-sponsored militias and foreign terrorist groups, and the ongoing and illegal trans-shipment of weapons and munitions from Iran and Syria into Lebanon.

On February 14, 2005, former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, along with 22 other people, were assassinated by a massive bomb.

The Lebanese Council of Ministers, on November 25, 2006, approved a statute for the establishment of a tribunal of an international character according to the terms negotiated between the Government of Lebanon and the United Nations in order to bring to justice all those responsible for the terrorist bombing of February 14, 2005.

Hezbollah, a United States Department of State designated Foreign Terrorist Organization, and their pro-Syrian allies have declared the democratically-elected and legitimate government of Lebanon “unconstitutional”, and are seeking to topple the government through extra-legal means, including rioting, continuous street demonstrations outside of the Council of Ministers, and obstructing traffic in Beirut.

The United Nations Security Council, with the full support of the United States, adopted Resolution 1757, which established a Special Tribunal on June 10, 2007 to try all those found responsible for the terrorist bombing of February 14, 2005.

Cost

At the time of printing the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) had not scored this legislation.

Staff Contact

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